YOUNG KING COMICS

スピリットサークル

魂環

03

水上悟志

Spirit Circle

03

Satoshi Mizukami

[CIRCLE 15]

WHY DID YOU DO THIS?!

KOKO...

WHY...

FOR-TUNA...

スピリットサークル 魂環

CIRCLE 15
HOUTAROU 1

水上悟志
SATOSHI MIZUKAMI

Spirit Circle

WHY DID I DO THIS...?

...?

WELL, BECAUSE...

WHY...?

...TUNA!!

FOR..

CLASH

THAT MY FATHER...!!

IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT EAST--!

EVEN IF IT TAKES A THOUSAND YEARS...

...OR TEN THOUSAND...

...END YOUR CURSE!!

I...

...WILL...

SLIP

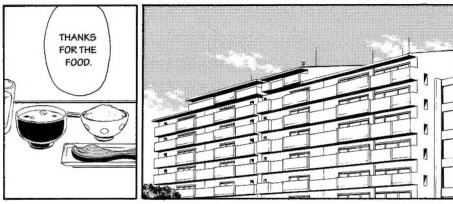
SPLOOSH

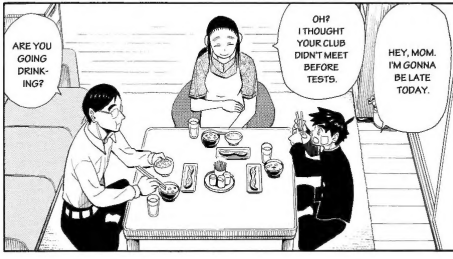
WHOA!!

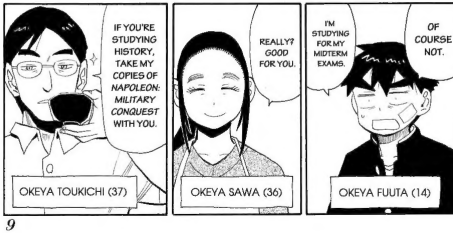
SOMETHING HAPPENED TO EAST... BECAUSE OF ME...?

A DREAM...

...


THANKS FOR THE FOOD.


ARE YOU GOING DRINK-ING?
OH? I THOUGHT YOUR CLUB DIDN'T MEET BEFORE TESTS.
HEY, MOM. I'M GONNA BE LATE TODAY.

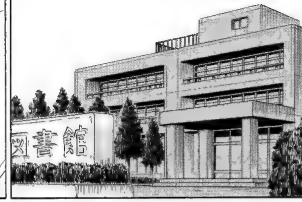

IF YOU'RE STUDYING HISTORY, TAKE MY COPIES OF NAPOLEON: MILITARY CONQUEST WITH YOU.
OKEYA TOUKICHI (37)
REALLY? GOOD FOR YOU.
OKEYA SAWA (36)
I'M STUDYING FOR MY MIDTERM EXAMS.
OF COURSE NOT.
OKEYA FUUTA (14)

THE TEST DOESN'T EVEN COVER NAPOLEON.
COMICS WILL TEACH YOU EVERYTHING IMPORTANT.
THOSE ARE COMICS.
MY UNBORN BROTHER (OR SISTER?) MAY BE SOMEONE I KNOW, TOO.
I HAVEN'T MET MOM YET... BUT MAYBE I ALREADY HAVE.
DAD...
I MET MY FATHER IN A PAST LIFE.
SASSHOUL TOKUGAWA IEYASU.
HIDETORE...
BE YOUR THE NEW SHI...
HYOUJU NOBU.
AS LONG AS I'VE GOT MY LIQUOR...
WELL... WHO CARES ABOUT HIM?
HUH? I CAN'T REMEMBER HIS FACE... OR HIS NAME.
YOU KNOW... VANN'S BROTHER, THE GUY WHO SENT ASSASSINS AFTER HIM.
MY BROTHER... I HOPE IT'S NOT HIM.

...DID I SAY SOME-THING?
!
...
...WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, FUUTA?
WHAT?
THAT'S PLAIN WATER.
...
WHO IS HE TRYING TO BE?
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
OUR SON'S BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY... HE WAS PRETENDING TO BE AN OLD MAN
I CAN HEAR YOU.
ARE YOU OKAY?
MAS-TER?
REEL
OKEYA FUUTA...
I AM OKEYA FUUTA.
SHAKE

I AM OKEYA FUUTA...
YOU DON'T LOOK WELL.
MAS-TER?

SIGN: STUDY ROOM A



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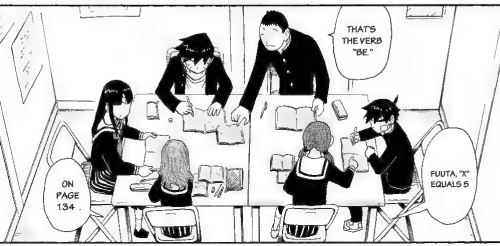


TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH, FUUTA!! I FIGURED THAT OUT BEFORE SUMMER BREAK.
THAT DIDN'T TAKE LONG, IDIOT!!
I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND THIS!
YOU IDIOT!!
REALLY?
I SEE.. I GET IT NOW.

SORRY FOR MAKING YOU COME, KOKO-CHAN.
WELL, YEAH. I GUESS SO
ARE WE TOO ROWDY?
NO.

IS IT ALWAYS YOU FIVE?
SEE YOU LATER.
I'M GOING TO THE BATHROOM.

ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH FUUTA?
YOU TALK TO EACH OTHER IN SECRET
YOU GO HOME TOGETHER A LOT

HEY...
ISHIGAMI

SNAP
THIS IS YOUR ANSWER. FIGURE IT OUT.

WHA... YOU ..
YOU CAN'T THAT OUT OF THE BLUE
TET-SU!!
HUH?
DID I DO SOME-THING WRONG?
HUH?
WHAT?

WHICH IS IT...?
SEEMS COMPLICATED.
I DON'T GET IT, BUT FINE, I WON'T ASK AGAIN.
WHOA

!!
...
THEY ARE WHO THEY ARE.
I AM WHO I AM
DON'T GET CONFUSED

TOILET
FUUTA-KUN.

MY HANDS ?
I RECOMMEND LOOKING AT YOUR HANDS.
DON'T LOOK IN MIRRORS FOR SELF-AFFIRMATION.
!
EAST...

I DON'T ALWAYS BOTHER TO HIDE IT. IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
SHE FIGURED OUT WHO I WAS BECAUSE OF THE MARK ON MY CHEEK.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SHOWN MYSELF TO YOU.
IT'S MY FAULT THAT KOUKO REALIZED YOUR TRUE IDENTITY.
WHAT?
WHA..
.. DO SOME-THING TO YOU?
DID I...
THAT MY FATHER ...!!
IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT EAST...
BUT...
IT'S FINE.
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY...
IT WAS FORTUNA.
..IT WASN'T YOU
!
YOU MUSTN'T SAY THAT!
FUUTA-KUN!!
THEY'RE BOTH ME.

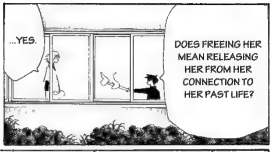
YOU MUST NOT FORGET...
...THAT YOU ARE YOU...!!
YOU'RE OKEYA FUUTA-KUN!!
YOU'RE NOT FORTUNA!!
...
SO, WHAT DID I—ER, FORTUNA DO TO YOU?
UM...
OH... OKAY...
...TO SAVE ME.
YOU ONLY TRIED...
BUT...
?
...

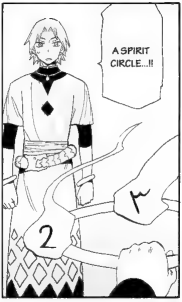
I'M THE ONE WHO HAD THE MOST TROUBLE DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN YOU
..AND FOR-TUNA
SEEING YOU BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES, AND I SHOWED MYSELF TO YOU
BESIDES... NOW THAT FORTUNA'S SOUL HAD MATURED THROUGH MULTIPLE REBIRTHS ..
..I THOUGHT HE MIGHT SAVE KOUKO
!
...SAVE HER?
BUT I WAS WRONG.
VANN... I MEAN, FOR...
NO, I MEAN...
AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL SINK INTO YOUR PAST SELVES.
THE "OBLIVION OF REINCARNATION" MOST LIKELY EXISTS TO HEAL TIRED SOULS. .
...AND IT'S PROOF THAT ONE MUST ALWAYS HAVE THE STRENGTH TO LIVE IN THE "PRESENT "
FUUTA-KUN! YOU MUST NOT WITNESS ANY MORE PAST LIVES!!
YOU HAVE TO STOP THIS!

I'M GONNA SEE THEM.
NO WAY.
YOU NEVER WANTED TO EXPERIENCE YOUR PAST LIVES IN THE FIRST PLACE!
B-BUT YOU...
...
WHAT--!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER, THEN?
BECAUSE I MAY BE ABLE TO SAVE ISHIGAKI-SAN.
...
THEN WHY..?!
HMM...
I GUESS

KOUKO... BELIEVES HERSELF TO BE "KOKO."
THE KOKO OF THE PAST WHO LIVED WITH ME, FORTUNA, AND RUNE.
AND...SHE'S CURRENTLY LIVING THE CONTINUATION OF THAT LIFE

BECAUSE OF THIS THING.
ROAAAR


DOES FREEING HER MEAN RELEASING HER FROM HER CONNECTION TO HER PAST LIFE?
...YES.


A SPIRIT CIRCLE...!!

UNTIL JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, I THOUGHT...
...I WOULDN'T MIND SEEING A LITTLE MORE OF MY PAST LIVES.
BUT NOW...

I'LL DO IT.
I FEEL EVEN MORE MOTIVATED.
I WON'T LET FORTUNA BEAT ME!
LEAVE IT TO ME, EAST.
Y-YOU LOOK DETERMINED, BUT YOUR MOTIVATION IS VAGUE!
NOT EVEN FLORS!!
THUD
NOT FONE...
NOT VANN.

YOU...
REALLY MIGHT!
YOU...
I CAME TO STOP YOU, BUT INSTEAD YOU'VE WON MY SUPPORT.
YOU TRULY ARE AMAZING.
I GUESS... IT'S SORT OF OUR DESTINY OR SOMETHING.
BESIDES, IF EVERYTHING RESOLVES NICELY...
WELL, IT'LL WORK OUT.
MAYBE WE'D EVEN END UP DATING.
FARE-WELL..
THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY...
SHIMMER

SHIMMER

OH.
UH...
WHO KNOWS?

OW!
MY NECK!
GRAB
KEEP TALKING NONSENSE AND I'LL PUSH YOU OFF A HIGH PLACE AGAIN.
STOMP
STOMP

JUST WHO DO YOU THINK...
...WILL END UP DATING?

YOU CHILD..
WHAT ARE YOU BLUSHING ABOUT?
...
EVERYONE'S SO HUNG UP ON ROMANCE.
SEE YOU LATER.
BYE.
BYE.
LATER.
UNTIL I TALKED TO EAST AND GOT MOTIVATED, THINGS WEREN'T LOOKING TOO GOOD.
LOOKING AT MY HANDS DOES CALM ME DOWN.
I FELT LIKE CONSCIOUS-NESSES OTHER THAN MY OWN WERE SPREADING LIKE STAINS INSIDE ME
ESPE-CIALLY
HANDS.
...

MORE THAN FLORS OR VANN WHO LED LONG LIVES...
FONE...
...I FEEL LIKE FONE'S SENSE OF SELF IS STRONGER.

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF.
NOT "YOU."
YOU CAN'T LET GO OF THE PAST EITHER, FONE.

...AND SHE NEVER LETS GO OF THE PAST.
SHE'S A SORE LOSER, SHE'S ANNOYING...
...AND SAYING CRUEL THINGS.
ALWAY'S HITTING PEOPLE...
THAT WOMAN...
THERE'S NO NEED TO SAVE HER. IT'S A PAIN IN THE ASS.
WHAT ORDINARY CHIPLANTS.

Thanks
OH I FORGOT.
MASTER, MASTER.
GOOD WORK, RUNE.
DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER ASK YOU TO PICK UP MILK?
HEH HEH
I KNOW

I WISH HE'D SHUT UP

OH.
OH.
MILK!!
BOOZE.
I REMEMBERED I HAD TO BUY SOMETHING AND TURNED BACK.
SEE YOU LATER.
ISN'T YOUR PLACE IN THE OTHER DIRECTION?
THANK YOU.
DO YOU EVER FORGET WHO YOU ARE?
UH, UM .. LISTEN, ISHIGAKI-SAN.
WHAT?
WAIT ..
HEY.
BY "ME," YOU MEAN THE "KOKO" OF THE PAST?
I AM ALWAYS ME.
...I'M ME.

THEN WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE OTHER FOUR?
TETSU AND THE OTHERS.
NOTHING IN PARTIC-ULAR.
I THINK THEY'RE ALL GOOD PEOPLE.

BUT...
ARBOL AND HALARA..
OH, I GET IT..

NOT REALLY.
BESIDES THOSE FOUR, I'VE MET LOTS OF OTHER PEOPLE IN PLENTY OF OTHER FORMS.
I DON'T REALLY THINK ANYTHING ABOUT THEM
I JUST THINK THIS IS HOW WE MET THIS TIME.

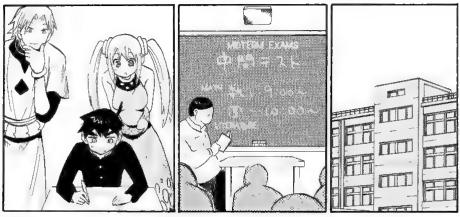
BUT WHAT ABOUT ME...?
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU'RE SPECIAL.
BECAUSE YOU WERE THE BEGINNING.

SO MASTER IS SPECIAL TO YOU
IT'S SO NICE TO BE YOUNG
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!

AND SINCE I DON'T SAY MERRY STUFF EITHER...
BYE.
SHUT UP, YOU CREEP! I HOPE YOU DIE!
I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE SPEC...

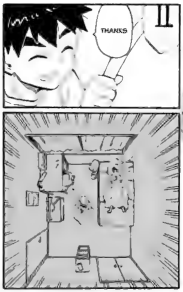
BUT SHE...
MAYBE IT'S FORTUNA WHO THINKS SHIGAKI-SAN IS SPECIAL

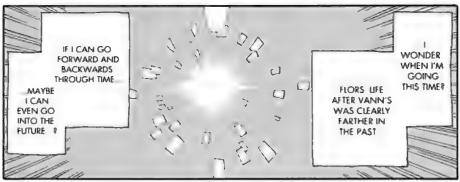
I WIL YOU, I WIS
FOR UNA
SPACI FICA


MIDTERM EXAMS

THE END OF OCTOBER

I'M GONNA GO.
OKAY
SLAP


THANKS
OKAY
MAS-
TER.
HAVE
A NICE
TRIP


I WONDER WHEN I'M GOING THIS TIME?
FLOR'S LIFE AFTER VANN'S WAS CLEARLY FARTHER IN THE PAST
IF I CAN GO FORWARD AND BACKWARDS THROUGH TIME...
MAYBE I CAN EVEN GO INTO THE FUTURE !!

NO
I DON'T CARE WHERE I GO
I'D JUST LIKE TO SEE HER AGAIN...
REI...
...!!

HUH. ?
...
CHAPTER FIVE
OH
YOU'RE AWAKE
DON'T MAKE A SOUND
IF WE KILL YOU, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO COLLECT OUR RANSOM. .
. HOU-TAROU-SAN.
WHAT ..?
HOUTAROU

スピリットサークル
魂環
SPIRIT CIRCLE

AZUMA-SENSEI

吾妻先生

CIRCLE 16
HOUTAROU 2

I-I TOLD THEM.
THAT WE'D KILL THE HOSTAGE IF THEY DIDN'T BRING THE RANSOM BY FOUR?
YOU'RE SURE YOU TOLD THEM, RIGHT?
THEY'RE LATE!

...YOU WON'T GET A RANSOM FOR ME.
WHAT?
THAT'S RIGHT THESE GUYS KIDNAPPED ME, AND
A RAN-SOM..?
HUMPH.
MY HEAD'S CLEARING UP.
THROB THROB
OW.

THE BLACK HOOD..
SOMEONE WAS BEHIND THIS AFTER ALL.
SIGH...
IF WE KIDNAP YOU, LORD FURAN WILL PAY ANY AMOUNT TO GET YOU BACK.
THE MAN IN THE BLACK HOOD TOLD ME SO.
HOUTAROU, THE MAN WITH A SCAR ON HIS LEFT CHEEK... IT'S GOTTA BE YOU!!
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU SIGHING FOR?
WHO..
WHO ARE YOU?!
AN ENVOY?
WHO'S THAT?
GO AWAY.
WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING.
SHOVE
?
WHOOSH

SPLOOSH
WHUAPH
SPURT
SLASH
SHUFFLE
SWISH
SWING
WH-WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!

FLAP
PSSHHT
TOTTER
SWIP
WOW...
WO--
WHEW
Y-YEAH I DID!
I AM.
YOU'RE KAJIMA HOUTAROU-SAN?
WHO ARE YOU?
THEY HIRED ME TO PROTECT YOU.
I'M JINKUROU THE NINJA!!
NICE TO MEET YOU!

DON'T YOU KNOW WANT TO KNOW WHO HIRED A NINJA TO SAVE YOU?!
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY THE GUY IN THE BLACK HOOD HAD THOSE WANDERING SAMURAI KIDNAP YOU?!
CAN'T YOU ACT MORE SURPRISED?
THAT'S IT?!
REALLY? THANKS.
YOU SAVED ME.
Eh?
Huh?
I WAS JUST TOLD TO PROTECT YOU
TRUTH IS, I DON'T KNOW. WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU DON'T KNOW?!
I KNOW THE ANSWER TO BOTH OF THOSE QUESTIONS.
YOU KNOW?!
...
ACTU-ALLY..
GRIN
PRO-TECT ME...
...
YOU'RE COMING TO MY PLACE?
WELL, THERE WILL BE TIME FOR YOU TO TELL ME LATER.
I COULDN'T PROTECT YOU OTHERWISE.
I SAID I'D PROTECT YOU.
IS YOUR PLACE NEARBY? I'M GONNA STAY WITH YOU FOR A WHILE

SCRUB
YOU LIVE HERE ALONE?
YEAH
IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S MY JOB.
I OWE YOU MY LIFE.
SORRY I CAN'T OFFER YOU WITH MORE.
IS THAT TEA?
HOT WATER.
BLAH
WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GUY WHO HIRED ME?
WHO'S THE MAN IN THE BLACK HOOD?
WHY WERE THEY AFTER YOU?
SO?
WHAT A STRANGE MAN.
HE'S TALKATIVE, OVERLY FRIENDLY, AND TOOK THOSE SAMURAI HEAD ON.
HE HE DOESN'T SEEM MUCH LIKE A NINJA.
HOU-TA-ROU!
HEY!
HUH?
THAT'S A LOT TO ANSWER AT ONCE.
YOU'RE A NINJA. FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOUR.

TUP TUP TUP
HOU-TA-ROU!!
PRIN-CESS?!
COUGH
PRINCESS... YOU'RE CAME OUT HERE DRESSED LIKE THAT AGAIN.
URGH!!
WHUD
GRAB
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!!
THANK GOOD-NESS!
JUMP
THE FURAN FAMILY HAS THE LORD AND KAJIROU-SAMA...
A-ALONE...
IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU, I'D BE ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD!!
SHUT UP!!

MY ONLY BROTHER IS YOU, HOUTAROU!!
I DON'T LIKE MY FATHER OR KAJIROU!!
MY ONLY FAMILY...

THE FURAN FAMILY CAN GO TO HELL!
FEH!
PRIN-CESS!!

EX-CUSE ME.
BOW
OH.

BRO-THER?
WHAT?

I AM GRATEFUL.
JIN-KUROU-DONO.

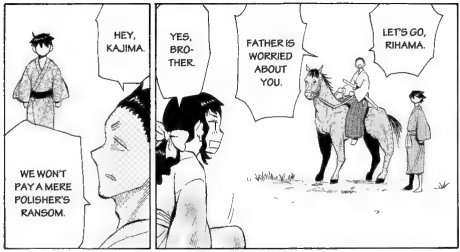
...

...!, JINKUROU, HAVE RESCUED HOUTAROU-DONO.
AS PER YOUR REQUEST, PRINCESS ..

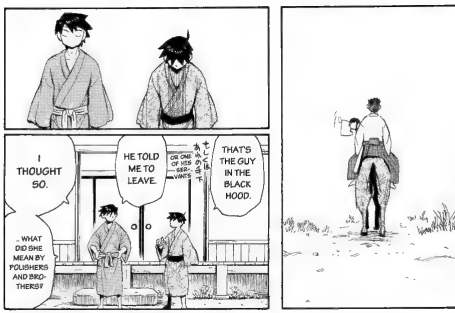
PRINCESS RIHAMA.
NO PROBLEM.
JIN-KUROU-DONO.
I SHALL CALL ON YOU AGAIN.
WAIT A MINUTE...
THEN THE MAN IN THE BLACK HOOD MUST BE "HIM."
THE PRINCESS HIRED SOMEONE TO PROTECT ME.
I KNEW IT
WHY ARE THEY JUST STARING AT EACH OTHER...?
I CAN'T BREATHE
HUH?

I TOLD YOU NOT TO COME HERE!
YOU'RE HERE AGAIN?!
NEIGH
RIHA-MA!!
TSK.
BOW
KA-JIROU-SAMA.
BOW
THIS MAN SAVED HOUTAROU.
...WELL, YES.
YOU SEEM TO BE ALIVE.
KA-JIMA.
I HEARD YOU WERE KIDNAPPED BY WANDERING SAMURAI
TSK.
MY NAME IS JINKUROU
HEH.
AS HE'S QUITE DEPEND-ABLE
HE WILL BE STAYING HERE FOR A WHILE...

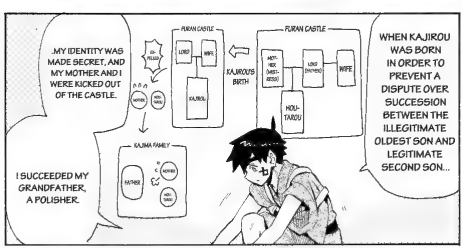
I SHALL REWARD YOU.
AP-PROACH.
...I SEE.
THANK YOU FOR RESCUING OUR CASTLE'S FAVORED POLISHER.
NOW LEAVE.
CLINK
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...
WHISPER
GLANCE
RONIN..
YOU'LL REGRET THIS
MUTTER
!
SHUFFLE
BOW
THIS IS TOO MUCH.
I ONLY DID WHAT ANY-ONE WOULD HAVE DONE..


HEY, KAJIMA.
WE WON'T PAY A MERE POLISHER'S RANSOM.
YES, BROTHER.
FATHER IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
LET'S GO, RIHAMA.

THANKS TO YOU.
YOU GOT LUCKY.


I THOUGHT SO.
HE TOLD ME TO LEAVE.
THAT'S THE GUY IN THE BLACK HOOD.
..WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY POLISHERS AND BROTHERS?

SCRAPE
THE NAME KAJIMA AND MY TRADE WERE MY MOTHER'S NAME AND PROFESSION.
THOSE TWO ARE THE LEGITIMATE CHILDREN OF THE FURAN FAMILY I WAS BORN FROM A MISTRESS

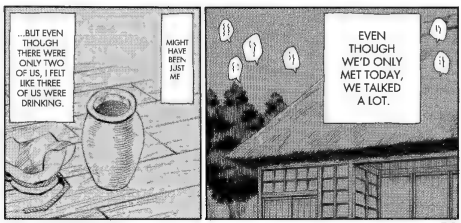

MY IDENTITY WAS MADE SECRET, AND MY MOTHER AND I WERE KICKED OUT OF THE CASTLE.
I SUCCEEDED MY GRANDFATHER, A POLISHER.
FURAN CASTLE
LORD
WIFE
KAJIROU'S BIRTH
KAJIROU
KAJIMA FAMILY
FATHER
MOTHER
FURAN CASTLE
MOTHER (MISTRESS)
LORD (FATHER)
WIFE
KOU-TAROU
WHEN KAJIROU WAS BORN IN ORDER TO PREVENT A DISPUTE OVER SUCCESSION BETWEEN THE ILLEGITIMATE OLDEST SON AND LEGITIMATE SECOND SON...

KAJIROU BELIEVES I WANT TO BE THE HEIR AND HATES ME.
THE PRINCESS HATES HER BROTHER FOR HATING ME.
KAJIMA
FURAN
I'M THE HEIRS
DISLIKE
HATRED
HALF-SIBLINGS
RIHAMA, WHO WAS BORN LATER, TREATS ME MORE LIKE A BROTHER THAN KAJIROU...

I HEARD YOU'RE OUR BROTHER.
YOU'RE HOUTAROU.
P-PRIN-CESS?!
..SINCE THEY WERE CHILDREN
THEY'VE KNOWN...
WHO KNOWS?
I THOUGHT IT WAS A SECRET
HOW DO THEY KNOW ABOUT YOU?
YEAH
I DO.
SO.
DO YOU DRINK?
HAH
STRANGELY ENOUGH .

THE POLISHING WORK HE TAUGHT ME IS SURPRISINGLY INTERESTING.
YOU CREATE PATTERNS IN THE BLADE.
MY MOTHER HATED LOOKING AT THE SCAR ON MY CHEEK. WE WERE NEVER CLOSE, BUT MY GRANDFATHER WAS GOOD TO ME.
MY MOTHER AND GRAND-FATHER DIED OF ILLNESS.
STRANGELY ENOUGH, I ENJOYED DRINKING WITH JINKUROU.

WHILE I WAS FRYING FISH BY THE RIVER, I SUDDENLY HEARD SOMEONE BEHIND ME SAY, "LET ME HAVE SOME."
SEEMS LIKE SHE SNEAKS OUT OF THE CASTLE AND WALKS AROUND A LOT.
UNTIL PRINCESS RIHAMA PICKED ME UP RECENTLY, I WAS A WANDERER.
TOKUGAWA WAS CRITICAL OF THE PLACE I USED TO WORK, SO WE GOT SHUT DOWN.


...BUT EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE ONLY TWO OF US, I FELT LIKE THREE OF US WERE DRINKING.
MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUST ME
EVEN THOUGH WE'D ONLY MET TODAY, WE TALKED A LOT.

DON'T FORGET YOUR PLACE.
AND YOU ARE A POLISHER.
I AM THE LEGITIMATE HEIR TO THE FURAN FAMILY.

CLATTER...
ALL I WANT IS TO BE A POLISHER MY WHOLE LIFE
WHY ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME?
AS THE LEGITIMATE SON, YOU'RE THE HEIR TO THE FURAN FAMILY.
KAJI-ROU.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE.

THEY'RE ASSASSINS THEY'RE NOT LIKE THE SCUM WE ENCOUNTERED THIS AFTER-NOON
BACK ME UP.
WH-WHO, ME...?!
THERE ARE TWO PEOPLE OUTSIDE
QUIET
!!
JIN-KU...
THEY DON'T EXPECT YOU TO FIGHT BACK. WE'LL TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE AND TURN THEIR SURPRISE ATTACK ON THEM
G-GOT IT...!!
THEY DON'T CONSIDER YOU A THREAT.
IF THEY DID, THEY'D SEND THREE OR FOUR GUYS.

SWISH
SHFF...
?!
CLANG
AHH!!
SHAK

KACHANG
!!
!!
WE FAIL-ED!!
RUN!!
HE BLOCKED IT?!
WHACK
CLANG
CHING
DASH!
CLANG
YOU WON'T ESCAPE!!

WHUD
AT LEAST HOUTA-ROU CAN ESCAPE...
SHIT.
CLANG
OVER-HEAD STANCE!!
LOWER STANCE!!

SPIN

WHAM

TSK.
RE-TREATH!

...!!
THEY SWAPPED PLACES IN AN INSTANT?!

...

PROFES-SIONALS DON'T HESITATE
TO RETREAT
WHEW!!

DIDN'T HE OFFER YOU MORE MONEY THAN THE PRINCESS?
PROB-ABLY.
...WHY DID YOU REFUSE KAJIROU WHEN HE TOLD YOU TO LEAVE?

WAY STRONGER THAN THE GUYS FROM THIS AFTERNOON
THEY'RE STRONG.

IT LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE WEIGHING THE MONEY AGAINST ME
SORRY
IN THAT MOMENT
ANYWAY, OUR TEAM-WORK WAS AMAZING!
I-IT
IT WAS JUST YOUR IMAGINATION
OH!!
YEAH, IT WAS!

I'D NEVER DO THAT
HA
BREAKING A PRIOR CONTRACT'S DISHONOR-ABLE

I HAD A STRANGE DREAM THAT NIGHT
FOR SOME REASON, IT WAS SO NOSTA[illegible] I COULD CRY

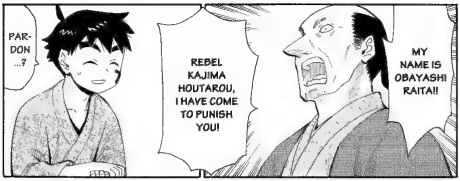
MY BODY MOVED ON ITS OWN LIKE I'D PRACTICED THE MOVE A BUNCH OF TIMES BEFORE!
ME, TOO!
I HAD AN EPIPHANY THE MOMENT OUR BACKS TOUCHED!
I WAS SO HAPPY!

スピリットサークル
魂環
SPIRIT CIRCLE

FATHER

CIRCLE 17
HOUTAROU 3

EXCUSE ME.
EXCUSE ME.
EX-CUSE ME.
IS THERE A KAJIMA HOUTAROU HERE?
YES, SIR.
RIGHT HERE.
RATTLE RATTLE
RATTLE RATTLE
HMPH.
WEL-COME.
ARE YOU HERE TO HAVE SOMETHING POLISHED?


PAR-
DON
...?
REBEL
KAJIMA
HOUTAROU,
I HAVE COME
TO PUNISH
YOU!
MY
NAME IS
OBAYASHI
RAITA!!

PAR-
DON
...?!
ずしっ
CLINK

YOU'RE
UNARMED.
USE THIS.
I'LL USE THE
SHORTER
ONE.

WHAT?!
ドドドドド
DASH!
LET'S
HAVE
A FAIR
FIGHT!!

VERY
WELL.
ぬっ...
LOOM

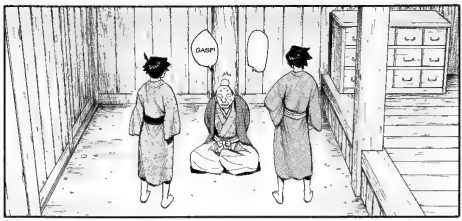
GLANG

SHUFFLE
STEP
!

...
AND WHY'D HE BOTHER TO KNOCK ON MY DOOR, ANYWAY?
HE'S AN ASSASSIN.
WHAT A SHOCK! I DIDN'T EXPECT AN ASSASSIN TO SHOW UP IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!

...
HRAAH!!
AA
A
AH!
KLONK
ACK
--!!
!!!
WUMPH
!!!

HEY
I'M BACK
ARE YOU OKAY?
Y-YEAH, JINKUROU
WEL-COME BACK.
IS THIS OLD GUY AN ASSASSIN HIRED BY THE FURAN FAMILY?
WHY'D HE COME IN THE AFTERNOON?
WELL, WHAT-EVER.


GASP!

YOU'RE AWAKE.
GOOD MORN-ING.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE WANT TO ASK YOU BEFORE WE KILL YOU.

HE IDENTIFIED HIMSELF? AN ASSASSIN?
YEAH, YEAH WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
HE SAID HIS NAME'S OBAYASHI RAITA.
YOU--!
YOU ATTACKED ME FROM BEHIND, YOU COWARD!

I AM A WARRIOR!
...OBAYASHI RAITA!!
I AM VASSAL OF THE FURAN FAMILY...
I'M NO ASSASSIN!!

...THERE'S A REBEL TRYING TO OVERTHROW THE FAMILY.
RIGHT?
I'M SURE KAJIROU TOLD YOU...
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT AN ASSASSIN.

THEN WHY ARE YOU WORKING AS AN ASSASSIN?
A WARRIOR?

THINGS ARE LIVELY AROUND HERE THIS MORNING.
PRINCESS!!

HOUTAROU...
JINKUROU...

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?!
IS THIS GUY STUPID, OR WHAT?
MORON.

YEAH, THIS GUY'S STUPID.
WHEW...
YOU'RE NOT? EXCELLENT!
MORON.
OF COURSE NOT.
ARE YOU LEADING THE PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE FURAN FAMILY?!
COULD IT BE?!
PRINCESS RIHAMA?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
FORGIVE THEM.
THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO KILL THEM.
HE THINKS IT'S BROTHERLY LOVE.
MY BROTHER LIED BECAUSE HE'S JEALOUS OF THEM.
THESE TWO ARE MY FRIENDS.
SURE.
OKAY, HOUTAROU.
UNTIE HIM.
QUICK CHANGE
I SEE. I UNDERSTAND.

NOW, OBAYASHI.
INSTRUCT THESE TWO... ESPECIALLY HOUTAROU, IN SWORDSMANSHIP.
I'LL CLEAR THINGS UP WITH MY BROTHER.
YES, MA'AM!!
AS YOU WISH, PRINCESS.
HUH..?
HUH..?

WELL, THEN.
I'LL BE LEAVING
PRINCESS
CHEER UP, BROTHER.
WHISPER
OBAYASHI MAY NOT BE SMART, BUT HE'S A SKILLED SWORDSMAN.
STUDY HARD.

THE PRINCESS MUSTN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE BENEATH HER..
YEAH..
THEY'RE STARING AT EACH OTHER AGAIN.

YES, MA'AM.
LEAVE IT TO ME.
JINKUROU-DONO, I APPRECIATE YOUR CONTINUED SERVICE.

TO SOME LORD?
...
MAR-RIED?
BESIDES, THE PRINCESS WILL EVENTUALLY BE MARRIED TO A DISTINGUISHED LORD...
WHAT? LOVE?
SHE'S A PRINCESS
YOU'RE RIGHT
YEAH
WHAT'S WRONG? ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
THEN THOSE TWO...
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S ONLY NATURAL

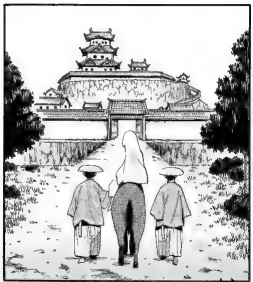
BY DAY, WE SWUNG WOODEN SWORDS.
DAYS PASSED
BY NIGHT, WE SWUNG REAL SWORDS.
HOW-EVER, THE ASSASSINS DIDN'T COME FRE QUENTLY
THEY WOULD COME OCCASIONALLY IN TWOS AND THREES AS IF IT HAD SLIPPED THEIR MINDS UNTIL NOW
HE MUSTVE ONLY HIRED THOSE PRO-FESSIONALS FOR THE DAY.
AND HE'S A CHEAP-SKATE.
NONE OF THEM ARE PROPER FOLLOWERS
ALL THE OTHERS WERE RUFFIANS.
PROFES-SIONALS ONLY CAME THE FIRST NIGHT.
NOT EVERY PATRON'S SO WEALTHY HE CAN EMPLOY YOU FOR LIFE.
OF COURSE YOU CAN
YOU CAN DO THAT?
HIRE MERCENARIES FOR A DAY?

...TO KILLING PEOPLE.
I GOT USED...

...SAID TERRIFYING THINGS.
SOMEDAY I'D LIKE TO FACE YOU!
がっはっは
BWA HA HA
YOU'VE GOT SKILL!
AND OBA-YASHI-SEN-SEI...

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN SUCCEEDING THE FURAN FAMILY.
WHY DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?
KAJI-ROU.
I DON'T WANT TO BE A FIGHTER .
...MUCH LESS A LEADER
I'M A POLI-SHER.

I ONLY STAY HERE BECAUSE OF THE PRINCESS...
BECAUSE I HAVE MY SISTER.
HOUTAROU.
WHAT CAN I DO...
...FOR MY SISTER...
CLOP
CLIP



THIS IS A SURPRISE.
NO ONE TOLD ME... THE GOVERNMENT'S EMISSARY WAS A WOMAN.

...
A PROPER CONVERSATION
I'M WORRIED WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HAVE...
WOMEN HAVE VIOLENT TEMPERS... ...AND ARE WILLFUL.
IWANA? HAH. THAT'S A KIND OF FISHY.
MY NAME IS IWANA. IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH ME BEING A WOMAN?
OH. I SEE. YOU'RE FROM THE CONSTABULARY.
...

I CURRENTLY REPRESENT THE FAMILY
MY FATHER IS RESTING
WHERE'S THE HEAD OF YOUR FAMILY?
...AND YOU'RE ONE WHO CAN?
PER-HAPS?
SOMEONE LIKE YOUR OLDER BROTHER...
ISN'T THERE ANYONE BETTER SUITED TO THE JOB?
YOU REPRESENT THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY?
WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT?!
I HAVE NO BROTHER!!
...CITIZENS HAVE EXPRESSED TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE REIGN OF THE FURAN FAMILY IS PUTTING THEM AT UNEASE.
RECENTLY YOU'VE BEEN CONSPIRING WITH LORDLESS SAMURAI AND OTHER RUFFIANS
SOME DOUBT YOU'RE A SUITABLE HEIR.
THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INHERI-TANCE.

SNAP
KA...
...JIROU-SAN?
DO YOU AGREE? ACTING HEAD OF HOUSE...
GRRR...
WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE PEOPLE IF THE GOVERNMENT RULED IN PLACE OF THE FURAN FAMILY.
I HATE BEING CALLED THE SECOND SON!
DON'T CALL ME JIROU!!
I DECLARE WAR ON THE TOKUGAWA!!
SOMEONE KILL THIS WOMAN!

SERI-OUSLY
SERI-OUSLY?
SERI-OUSLY?

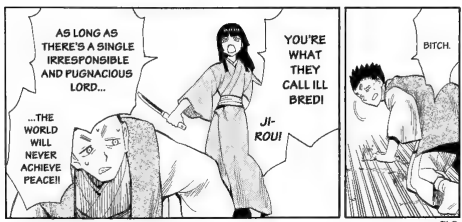
BUT IN AN INSTANT, SHE'D DRAWN A BLADE ON KAJIROU-SAMA...
...AND TOOK HIM HOS-TAGE.

KAJIROU-SAMA WAS QUICK TO ACT...

HRMPH
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EMISSARY?

THEY EVEN HAD US PREPARE A HORSE FOR EACH OF THEM.
THEY ESCAPED FROM THE CASTLE.

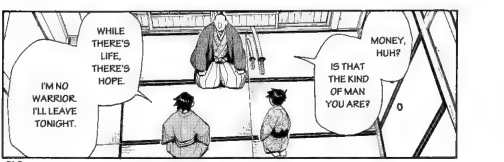
KICK
UGH!!
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH!


AS LONG AS THERE'S A SINGLE IRRESPONSIBLE AND PUGNACIOUS LORD...
...THE WORLD WILL NEVER ACHIEVE PEACE!!
YOU'RE WHAT THEY CALL ILL BRED!
JI-ROU!
BITCH.

KAJI-ROU-SA-MA!!
YAH
GALLOP GALLOP
YOU HAVE STARTED THIS FIRE!!
KNOW THIS!!

I'M PREPARED TO STAND WITH THE FURAN FAMILY...
...BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?
IT ALL HAP-PENED THIS MORNING.

I WON'T GET INVOLVED IN THIS WAR.
I'M WITH-DRAWING FROM THIS ONE.
I'M NOT BEING PAID ENOUGH FOR THIS.


WHILE THERE'S LIFE, THERE'S HOPE.
I'M NO WARRIOR. I'LL LEAVE TONIGHT.
MONEY, HUH?
IS THAT THE KIND OF MAN YOU ARE?

I HEARD THE KAJIMA POLISHERS ARE ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH THE FURAN.
YOU MUST OWE THEM YOUR ALLEGIANCE.
HOUTAROU, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
YOU'RE SKILLED. WILL YOU STAND WITH ME?
IT CAN'T BE HELPED
YOU MUST DECIDE BY THEN.
THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME. A LARGE ARMY MAY BE ARRIVING TOMORROW.
...
JINKUROU, TAKE CARE.
WELL, THEN I MUST PREPARE FOR BATTLE.

THIS IS GOOD.
NO ONE WILL TRY TO KILL YOU ANYMORE. THEY WON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT
NO MATTER WHAT KAJIROU DID
THE TOKUGAWA MEANT TO CRUSH THE FURAN FROM THE BEGINNING...
...DON'T BOTHER.

IF THE FURAN REALLY ARE FINISHED .
THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THE TOKUGAWA.
..THE FURAN ARE FINISHED

I ASK YOU TO KIDNAP AND PROTECT THE PRINCESS.
YOUR REWARD IS THE PRINCESS HERSELF.
THEN I'LL HIRE YOU.

IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM. MY SISTER'S IN LOVE WITH YOU.
AS HER OLDER BROTHER, I'LL ALLOW IT.
TAKE MY SISTER AS YOUR WIFE.
HOUTA-ROU..?

I CAN'T LET HER BURN HERSELF TO DEATH IN THE CASTLE EITHER.
...OR BECOME A TROPHY FOR THOSE SHITBAG TOKUGAWA.
I WON'T LET HER GET MARRIED TO SOME GEEZER SHE'S NEVER MET...

...I'LL MAKE SURE SHE'S HAPPY.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...

...I MEANT TO KIDNAP THE PRINCESS ON MY OWN AND ESCAPE WITH HER.
I WOULD'VE DONE IT EVEN IF YOU HADN'T ASKED.
FROM THE MOMENT OBAYASHI DESCRIBED THE SITUATION TO US...

WHAT CAN I DO?
THANK YOU, FRIEND.

COME WITH ME.
I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T SAY YOU'D PROTECT THE FURAN.

I HAVE A PREMONITION

I'LL DIE...

...FOR MY SISTER.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE PRAYED TO YOU...

...MISTER BUDDHA!

CIRCLE 17/END

スピリットサークル
魂環
SPIRIT CIRCLE

MOTHER

CIRCLE 18
HOUTAROU 4

RUSTLE
I HAVE TO GET HER OUT OF THE CASTLE BEFORE THE BATTLE BEGINS
I'M GOING TO RESCUE MY SISTER RIHAMA!!
A PATROL.
RUSTLE
WAIT.
THREE PEOPLE
IT'S TOO MANY TO KILL AT ONCE.
CALM DOWN. WE JUST HAVE TO GET PAST THEM.
WE'RE STILL FAR AWAY
THEY'RE GONE
GULP

IS THIS REALLY THE RIGHT PLACE?
YEAH
THE SECRET PASSAGEWAY THE PRINCESS USES SHOULD BE AROUND HERE.

PROBABLY NOT
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT HER FAMILY KNEW ABOUT IT AND TURNED A BLIND EYE?

SHE SAID NO ONE ELSE KNOWS ABOUT THE SECRET PASSAGEWAY
SHE TOLD ME ABOUT IT BEFORE.

AND THERE'S NO WAY HE WOULD'VE LET THE PRINCESS COME SEE ME.
IF HER FAMILY KNEW, THEN KAJIROU KNEW.

RUSTLE
THREE OF THEM...!
THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY.
!!

SHUFFLE
I GOT-CHA

SHHH!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT... WE'RE ACTUALLY HERE.
I TOLD YOU SO, OBAYASHI.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
...AND OBA-YASHI-SEN-SEI?!
P-PRIN-CESS?!

I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
TRAVEL WITH OBAYASHI-SAMA AS A PARTY OF FOUR.
MY NAME IS MATSU I'M THE PRINCESS' WET NURSE.
PLEASE TAKE THE PRINCESS AND RUN FAR AWAY.
HOUTAROU-SAMA, JINKUROU-SAMA

BUT . THE BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.
MY LEGS ARE WEAK.
I WILL STAY HERE.
I WOULD SLOW YOU DOWN.
FOUR... WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WE'VE ALREADY SAID OUR GOOD-BYES.
SHE'S BEEN CRYING
LET'S GO.
PRIN-CESS.
JINKUROU-DONO.
OBAYASHI-SAMA, PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE PRINCESS.
YES, MATSU-DONO! I WILL GUARD HER WITH MY LIFE!

I, JINKU-ROU
...HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU AWAY AND CLAIM YOU FOR MYSELF.
I KNEW YOU WOULD COME.
I AM YOURS.

RUSTLE
LET'S GO!
WELL, THEN

I'LL PROTECT THE PRINCESS WITH MY LIFE
I WILL
...?
HOUTAROU-SAMA, TAKE CARE

...MATSU APPARENTLY TOOK CARE OF YOU.
UNTIL KAJIROU WAS BORN. .
HOUTA-ROU.
...
DO YOU REMEMBER MATSU?

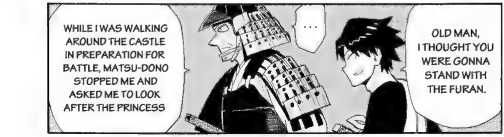
SHE'S ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE IN THE CASTLE WHO KNOWS WHO YOU ARE.
!

SNIFF!
...
...

HOUTA-ROU.
LET'S LIVE.

I HAD NO CONFI-DENCE.

PRIN-CESS
YES.


WHILE I WAS WALKING AROUND THE CASTLE IN PREPARATION FOR BATTLE, MATSU-DONO STOPPED ME AND ASKED ME TO LOOK AFTER THE PRINCESS
...
OLD MAN, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA STAND WITH THE FURAN.

I WONDER WHAT THAT PASSAGEWAY WAS LIKE. ?
BUT I HAD NO IDEA THAT A SECRET PASSAGEWAY WAS THERE

..PROTECTING THE PRINCESS MAY ALLOW THE FAMILY TO BE RESTORED

AAAH
AAAH
YAAAH

IT'S BEGUN..
THAT WAS QUICK.
SO SOON
THE ARMY WAS ALREADY NEARBY.
TOKUGAWA'S THE BIGGEST WARMONGER AROUND

THE FURAN ARE FINISHED.
KAJIROU... YOU FOOL..
...SEE YOU LATER.
DAD. KAJI-ROU.
...
YAAAH!
ROAR

...
ROAR
ROAAAR

AHA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA !!
AH HA HA HA HA !!
THE MASTER'S GONE CRAZY!!
AAAH! THE FIRE!

VANN...
IF ONLY VANN-SAMA HAD BEEN HERE...
THE FLANTYR FAMILY'S FINISHED...

I WON'T LET YOU HAVE THE FLANTYR FAMILY!!
ROAR
IS THAT WHERE YOU ARE, VANN?! BRO-THER!!
WHERE IS HE GOING?!
AAH!
WATCH OUT!!
ROAR
CRASH
SNAP
VANN?!
WHERE ARE YOU, VANN?!

JERK
びくっ

BROTHER!!

ZZZ ZZZ
HONK SHUU
...
A DREAM.

YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT, HAVE YOU?
SHALL WE GO?
NO.
I DID.
DON'T SLEEP.
YOURS ON WATCH
IT WAS JUST A LITTLE

I DON'T KNOW
JINKUROU, IS THERE ANYTHING AMISS?
THERE'S A WATERFALL NEARBY.
IT'LL HELPS US HIDE, BUT

I WAS AN APPRENTICE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY
THE PRINCESS EMPLOYING ME WAS PRINCESS RIHAMA.
RUMBLE
YO YO...
YAWN.
OH ME, TOO
I HAD A STRANGE DREAM
THE WORRIED PRINCESS CROSSED THE OCEAN TO CONSULT A FAMOUS FOREIGN FORTUNE TELLER.
BESIDES, WE WEREN'T OF THE SAME CLASS
THE PRINCESS SEEMED TO LOVE ME, BUT SHE WAS LIKE A YOUNGER SISTER TO ME.
...SATISFIED WITH HER MARRIAGE?
WAS THE PRINCESS IN YOUR DREAM..
I SAW THEM MARRIED...
AND LEFT ON A JOURNEY.
THAT WAS MY DREAM
I WAS OKAY WITH THAT.
THE FORTUNE TELLER PREDICTED THAT SHE MIGHT MARRY HOUTAROU

I FEEL SOME-THING
SOME-THING
SHE SAID SHE WOULDN'T MIND MARRY-ING YOU
YEAH. SHE WAS.
GUILTY
SOME-THING THAT MAKES ME FEEL...
YAWN
SPLASHHH
HUH..?
THOOM
RUMBLE
SPLASHHH
THOOM
SWIP
THEY'RE CLOSE!!
HORSES!
THOOM
SPLASHHH
THOOM

!!
PRIN-CESS!!
WHLID
PURSU-ERS!!
HURGH..
OBAYA-SHI!!
THOOM
THERE THEY ARE!
OVER THERE!!
...!!
TAKE HER UN-SCATHED!!
YOU'LL HIT THE PRIN-CESS!!
DON'T SHOOT!

WE'LL HOLD THEM OFF THEM HERE!
JINKUROU!! THE PRINCESS!!
GO!
HOU--!
RIHAMA...!!
GO!!
BROTHER...!!

I'M SURE WE'LL--!!
HOUTA-ROU!!
JIN...
!
TUG
DASH

I'M SURE--!!
YEAH...!!

KI-YAH!!
THOOM
WHEW

NEIGH
WHAT'S WRONG?!
?!
THE HORSES?!
WHOA?!
WOW.
THAT'S CRAZY...!!
HE STOPPED THE HORSES WITH A SHOUT...?!
...?!
DASH
YEAH!!
SHFF
TCH!
MOVE!!
SNORT
LET'S DO IT!!
HOU-TA-KOU!!
SHFF

KLANG
GRAB
WHLID

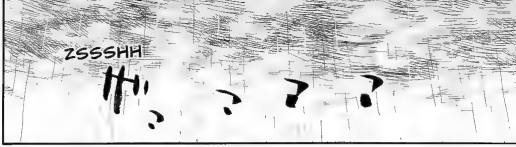
YOU WILL NOT PASS!!

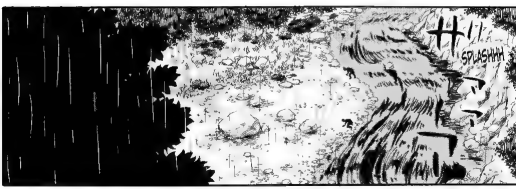
HOW-EVER...
THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD.
THESE TWO.
YAAAH

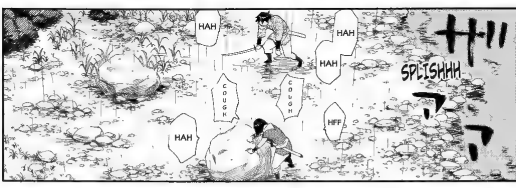
...THE AGE OF SWORDS.
THIS IS NO LONGER...
...FOOLISH WARRIORS.
FADE INTO HISTORY...
YAAAH!!

WHINNY
WHAMP
YAAAH!!
MOVE!!
YOU...
SCUFF
SCRAPE
!!
HOUTA-
ROU!!

WHOA
SPLASHHH
LURCH
MAS-
TER!!
FIGHT
WELL
DAMN MY
PISTOL !!
THE
KNIFE !!
SPLOOSH
PLINK
SPLASHHH
HOU-
TA-
ROU!!


ZSSSHH

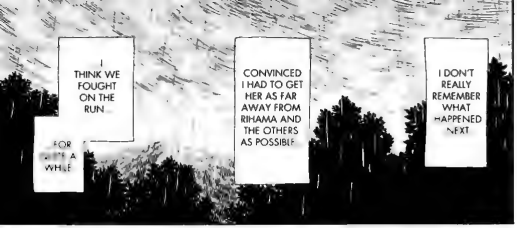

SPLASHHH


HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
COUGH
COUGH
HFF
SPLISHHH

HAH
HAH
SHE SEEMS FAMILIAR...
THIS WOMAN
HAH
HA-AAH
HAH
HAH

HAH
HAH
I FEEL LIKE I'VE MET HER BEFORE.
HAH
HAH
AND
...LIKE THIS.
...FOR US TO FACE OFF WITH SWORDS...
I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME..
...STRANGER
HEY...

IT'S GOOD
TO SEE YOU
AGAIN.


I THINK WE FOUGHT ON THE RUN...
FOR A WHILE
CONVINCED I HAD TO GET HER AS FAR AWAY FROM RIHAMA AND THE OTHERS AS POSSIBLE
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

I THINK SHE WAS JUST AS CAPTIVATED AS I WAS
BUT I...
NEVER GREW BORED

AFTER A WHILE, A LOUD NOISE BEGAN APPROACHING...
-RUMBLE
-RUMBLE

-RUMBLE

RUMBLE...
RUMBLE
RUMBLE...
RUMBLE...
CIRCLE 18/END

スピリットサークル
魂環
SPIRIT CIRCLE

KAJIROU

火次郎

CIRCLE 19
HOUTAROU 5

YAAAHH!!

RUMBLE
?!
IT'S COLLAPSING
IT'S COLLAPSING
WATCH OUT
IT'S DANGEROUS!

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

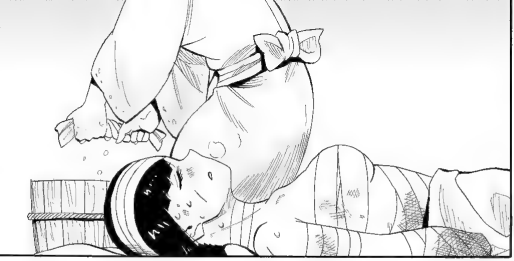
SO HOT...

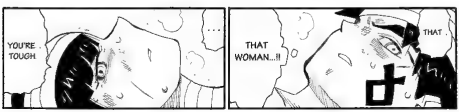
IT HURTS...

SO PAINFUL...

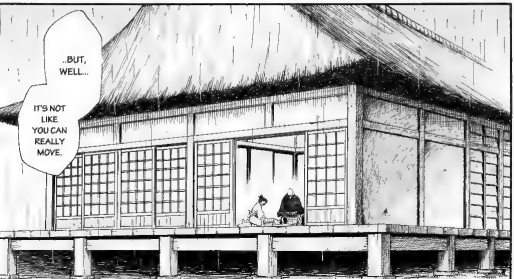
IT HURTS...

SO PAINFUL...!!




YOU'RE TOUGH.
....
THAT WOMAN..!!
THAT

YOU'LL REOPEN YOUR WOUNDS.
DON'T
HNNGH.
H..RGH.
UGH.


..BUT, WELL...
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN REALLY MOVE.

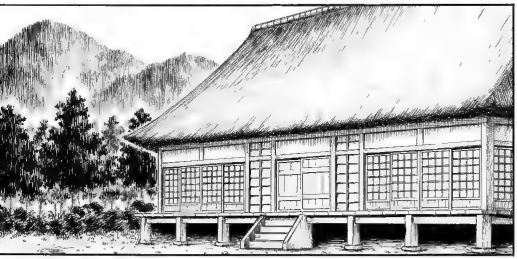
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN REALLY MOVE.

...!!

SHE'S BEEN TAKING CARE OF YOU THIS WHOLE TIME.
SHE'S THE ONE WHO FOUND YOU IN THE MOUNTAINS WHERE THAT LANDSLIDE HIT AND INSISTED THAT WE SAVE YOU.
YOU SHOULD THANK AKARI.

SMILE

THA...
...ANK...
...YOU.



CAN'T YOU FEED YOURSELF ..
..TOKU-GAWA DOG?
AAAH.
OPEN UP

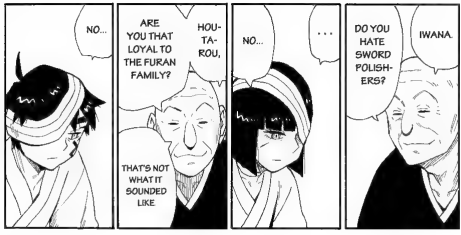
YOU DOG!
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A MINION?
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A DOG?
IT'S HARD TO EAT WITH MY LEFT HAND.
SHUT UP, SAMURAI'S MINION.
YOU'RE A KILLER, TOO...
...VILE WOMAN!!
YOU SUBJUGATE YOURSELF TO KILLERS AND POLISH THEIR KNIVES.
S-SORRY. WE'LL STOP
ER.
OKAY?
SHUNK
!!
I'M NOT ANGRY.
DON'T
FIGHT
SNIFF

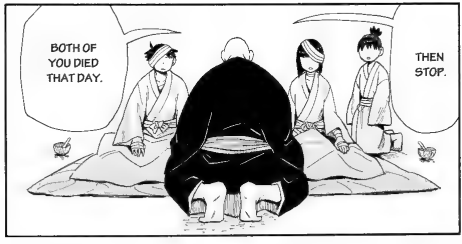
PRIEST...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME. THANKS TO YOU, I'VE RECOVERED TO THE POINT I CAN SIT UP.
GLUG GLUG
BUT IF YOU KEEP SHOUTING, YOUR WOUNDS WILL OPEN.
YOU SEEM TO BE FEELING BETTER.

?
BUT IT'S STRANGE.
I'VE ALREADY ASKED WHO YOU ARE AND HOW YOU ENDED UP IN THOSE MOUNTAINS...
WELL, THEN... IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE RESCUED YOU...
HRM.

GIVEN YOUR CURRENT CONDITION, THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO FIGHT ANYMORE.
...BUT WHY DO YOU FIGHT SO MUCH?
YOU MAY HAVE CROSSED SWORDS...
YOUR SITUATIONS ASIDE, YOU'VE NEVER MET EACH OTHER BEFORE.

SHE'S A SERVANT OF THE TOKUGAWA WHO TRIED TO CRUSH THE FURAN FAMILY.
HE'S THE SWORD POLISHER TO SAMURAI WHO SPREAD WAR AND UNHAPPINESS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.


NO...
ARE YOU THAT LOYAL TO THE FURAN FAMILY?
HOU-TA-ROU,
THAT'S NOT WHAT IT SOUNDED LIKE.
NO...
...
DO YOU HATE SWORD POLISH-ERS?
IWANA.


BOTH OF YOU DIED THAT DAY.
THEN STOP.

THE BUDDHA BROUGHT YOU HERE.
ALLOW...
...YOURSELVES TO BE REBORN HERE.

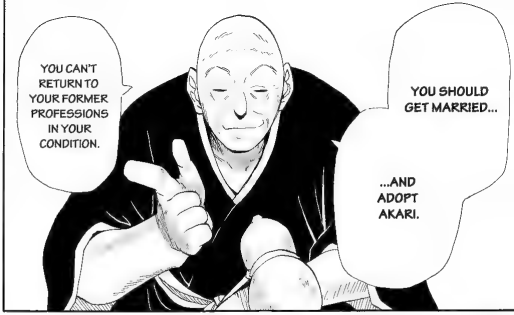
STOP?
THEN...

SHIVER

DID MY BODY BECOME LIGHTER...?

JUST NOW...

WHAT WAS THAT?


YOU CAN'T RETURN TO YOUR FORMER PROFESSIONS IN YOUR CONDITION.
YOU SHOULD GET MARRIED...
...AND ADOPT AKARI.

HAPPY!!
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT HAVING THEM FOR PARENTS, AKARI?
I SEE. I SEE.
WHAT...?!

BEAM
はぁぁぁ～。

ERRR...?

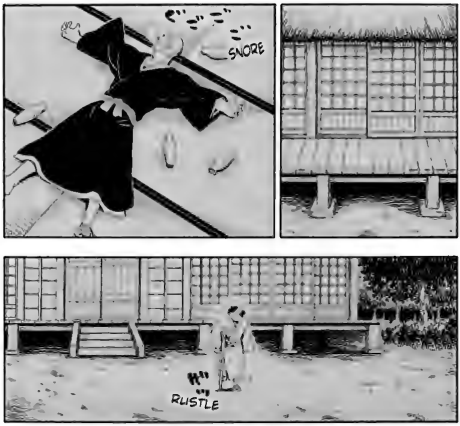
THINK ABOUT IT.
GULP
WELL, YOU'VE GOT LOTS OF TIME.
SHUNK

AT LEAST, I DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO
YEAH, NO.
NO WAY
BUT OUR ANSWER DIDN'T CHANGE
WE HAD TIME.
EVEN THOUGH WE'D TAKEN EACH OTHERS' LIMBS
YEAH, WE'RE NOT GETTING MARRIED
STRANGELY, WE DIDN'T HATE EACH OTHER ANY-MORE.
I DON'T MIND ADOPTING AKARI.
...WE WERE SATISFIED.
...IT FELT LIKE...
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY...
IT HAPPENED WHILE WE WERE PRACTICING WALKING WITH THE CRUTCHES THE PRIEST MADE FOR US.
THUNK
MORE TIME PASSED.

THE FURAN FAMILY'S FINAL MOMENTS WERE MAGNIFICENT.
YEAH.
GOOD WORK!
THESE ARE NICE.
YEAH
WE CAN WALK PRETTY WELL

THE FLEEING PRINCESS GOT CAUGHT IN A LANDSLIDE ALONG WITH HER PURSUERS AND THEY ALL DIED.
THE YOUNG CLAN REPRESENTATIVE SET FIRE TO THE CASTLE AND KILLED HIMSELF.

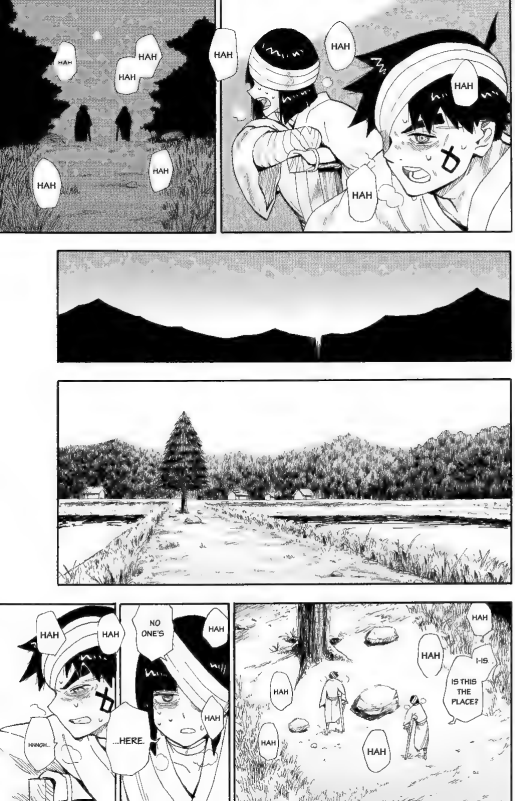
DON'T I KNOW IT
THE GOVERNMENT CAN BE CRUEL, BUT THE HEAVENS HAVE NO MERCY EITHER.


SNORE
RUSTLE

EVEN IF THEY'RE ALIVE, A LOT OF TIME HAS PASSED
DIDN'T THEY DIE IN THE LANDSLIDE?
TELL THEM I'LL REPAY THEM SOMEDAY
TAKE CARE OF AKARI AND THE PRIEST

WE'D PLANNED TO MEET SOMEWHERE IF WE GOT SEPARATED
THE NEAREST VILLAGE
WHERE ARE YOU, GORO?

JUST..
JUST TO SEE.
FOR WHAT REA-SON?
WHY?
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
WAIT.
FORGET ABOUT MY MISSION...
HOP
HOP
EVEN IF THE PRINCESS IS ALIVE, YOU CAN'T CARRY HER OFF IN YOUR CONDITION.
...
FINE.
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH


HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
NO ONE'S
...HERE
HNNGH...
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
-HS
IS THIS THE PLACE?

IT'S THE SAME AS THE SCAR ON YOUR CHEEK...
WHAT MARK...?
THE MARK ON THE TREE...
HOUTA-ROU...
SEE?
I KNEW IT.
I KNEW IT.
SEE?
HA... HA HA.
IT'S JINKU-ROU.

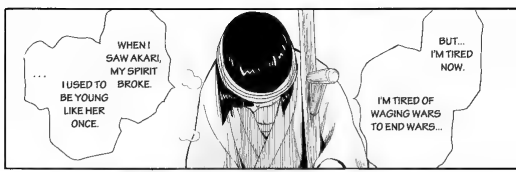
THE WORLD THINKS WE'RE DEAD
BEING ALONE AFTER US...
WE'RE ALIVE.
THAT'S ENOUGH
THEY'RE ALIVE, TOO.

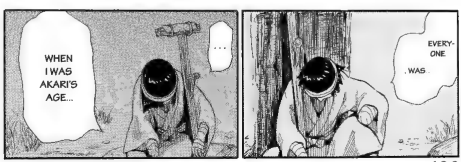
...WERE FEELING...
WE...

I SEE...
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT AFTER I TAKE A BREAK.
I'M GOING FROM WALKING TO MACH.
I DON'T KNOW.
WILL YOU GO AFTER THEM?
WHAT NOW?

I... I'M GOING BACK TO THE TEMPLE AFTER I REST...
I'M GOING TO ADOPT AKARI.
...HUH. SOUNDS GOOD.
MAYBE I'LL GO BACK, TOO...
I DO OWE AKARI AND THE PRIEST.

...I'VE WORKED A LONG TIME.
IN ORDER TO END WARS,
I THOUGHT I HAD TO ELIMINATE EVERY LAST WAR-MONGERING LORD...
SO I WORKED.


BUT... I'M TIRED NOW.
I'M TIRED OF WAGING WARS TO END WARS...
WHEN I SAW AKARI, MY SPIRIT BROKE.
I USED TO BE YOUNG LIKE HER ONCE.
...


WHEN I WAS AKARI'S AGE...
...
EVERY-ONE WAS

...
MY FAMILY IS FROM THE WEST
THE LEADER OF THE NINJAS TOOK PITY ON ME AND TOOK ME IN...
...HEY, HOUTA-ROU...?
HUH. I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORY TOO
SIGH
I GUESS I'LL TAKE A NAP TOO
...
I'M AWAKE.
WHAT FAMILY FROM THE WEST?
...HUH?
WHY?
BUT IT'S NOT OVER YET

CIRCLE 19 / END

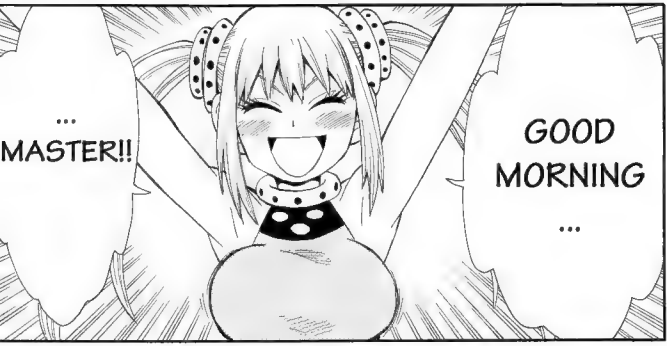
スピリットサークル
魂環
SPIRIT CIRCLE

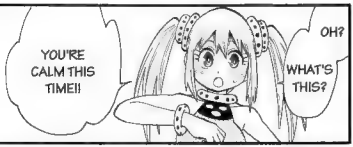
SPACIFICA
スペスシフィカ

CIRCLE 20

CITY • 1

...
...
CLATTER
カラン
WUMPH
ドサッ
CLATTER
カラン

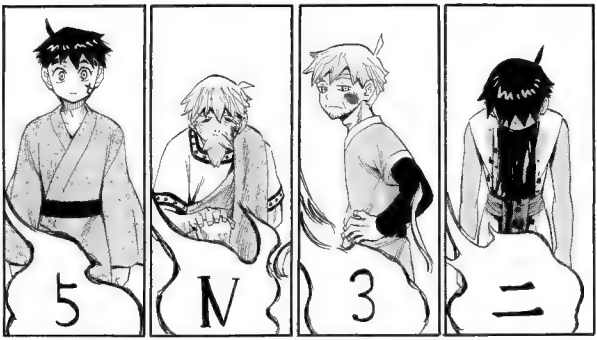

...
MASTER!!
GOOD MORNING
...


YOU'RE CALM THIS TIME!!
OH?
WHAT'S THIS?

SO COOL!
AND YOU SEEM KIND OF MATURE AND REFINED, MASTER!!

HEY.
MORN-ING.

IT WAS EXCESSIVELY DRAMATIC...
THIS PAST LIFE WAS ALMOST LIKE A MANGA... OR MAYBE A FILM.
...REFINED?
MAYBE IT'S HOUTAROU'S INFLUENCE...
THEY WERE BOTH YOUNG, BUT HIS DEATH WASN'T LIKE FONE'S.
HOUTAROU DIED YOUNG, BUT HE HAD SOME AMAZING EXPERIENCES...
!!
WHOA.
FWOOM
IN FACT, IT FEELS LIKE THINGS HAVE BEEN SETTLED BETWEEN ME AND ISHIGAMI-SAN...
OR SOME-THING...
IT FELT LIKE HE DIDN'T REALLY HAVE REGRETS.


5
N
3
二

ARE THERE STILL THREE MORE PAST LIVES?
NOW THE SPIRIT CIRCLE HAS FOUR FLAMES.
FOOM
ボ
N
三

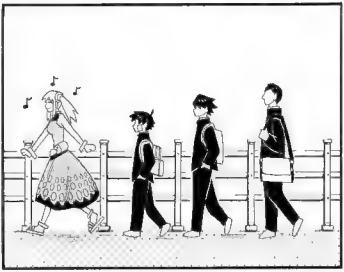
YOU SHOULD SMILE.
MASTER, YOU'RE MAKING A SCARY FACE.
SQUISH
II
EVEN SKIPPING FORTUNA, THERE ARE STILL TWO MORE...
TWO? DIDN'T MY CONNECTION WITH ISHIGAMI-SAN END WITH HOUTAROU'S LIFE?

WHAT KIND OF COMPARISON IS THAT?
WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE YOU THREW OUT ALL YOUR PORN?
YOU SEEM DIFFERENT AGAIN.

GOOD MORNING.
HEY.

HEY.
GOOD MORNING, FUUTA.

THERE IS NO GREATER LUXURY.
I GET TO SEE MY FRIENDS EVERY MORNING.



LODE... A PLACE WHERE ADULT MAGAZINES HAVE BEEN ABANDONED. EQUIVALENT TO A GOLD MINE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.
I FOUND A LODE AT THE GHOST APARTMENT. I'LL TELL YOU WHERE IT IS LATER.

SPEAKING OF PORN...
OH, RIGHT.

I WONDER IF THE HIGH SCHOOLERS IN THE APARTMENT THREW THEM OUT.
OH!
LIKE TAKEDA'S BRO?
GOOD GRIEF. THEY'RE SUCH CHILDREN.
RIGHT NOW I DON'T CARE ABOUT PORN...
HEH
BY THE WAY, I HAVEN'T HEARD RUMORS ABOUT THE APARTMENT'S GHOST RECENTLY.
MAYBE IT WAS EXORCISED.
...WHAT?!
FUUTA?
YOU SCARED ME.
WH-WHAT?
UM...
NOTHING...
I'VE GOT TO GO!!
WHERE?! WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?
?!
THE GHOST APART-MENT!! I'M SKIPPING SCHOOL!!
DASH
MASTER, WAIT.
Y-YOU'RE GOING TO PICK IT UP NOW...?!
FUUTA...
HUFF
HUFF...

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

YOU DIDN'T ASK SPECIFICALLY WHERE YOU COULD FIND THE LODE OF PORN.
THAT'S NOT IT!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER?!
WE MET THE "SPIRIT OF THE FALLEN WARRIOR" HERE!!
UM... IN LATE SEPTEMBER!!

MASTER...
WAIT FOR ME!!

AND HE STOLE THAT SWORD AND SPEAR FROM HIS ENEMIES
...
HE WAS STUCK FULL OF ARROWS!
THE ONE SWINGING A SWORD AND STAFF
...
THE FALLEN WARRIOR?
THAT PERSON STUCK WITH THOSE THINGS?
OBAYASHI-SENSEI!!!
THAT SPIRIT ...
THAT PERSON IS...
WHAT HAPPENED TO OBAYASHI-SENSEI?!
RUNE...
YOU KNEW HIM?
THIS WEAPON KILLS SOULS, DOESN'T IT?!
DID I...
I...HIT HIM WITH THE SPIRIT CIRCLE, BUT...

THAT'S ...

THAT'S GOOD...

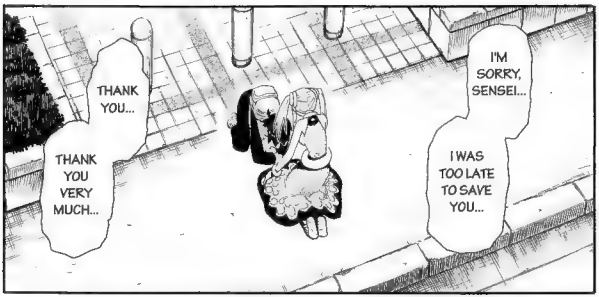
IN ANY CASE, HIS SOUL WASN'T KILLED OR DESTROYED.
HE RETURNED TO THE PLACE WHERE SPIRITS BELONG.

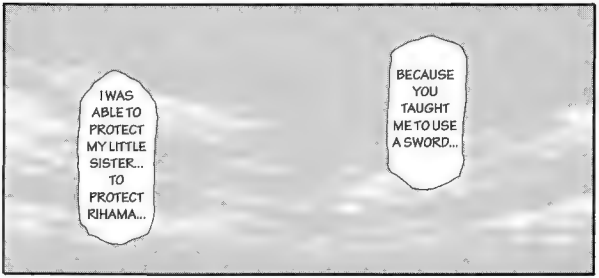
HE TURNED TO LIGHT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MASTER.

TURNED ...
...TO LIGHT?

DID... DID HE PASS AWAY?
UM... HE RETURNED TO THE LIGHT.
PASS AWAY?

HE... OBAYASHI-SENSEI BECAME A SPIRIT...
FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, HE KEPT...
HE KEPT PROTECT-ING THIS ROAD...


I'M SORRY, SENSEI...
I WAS TOO LATE TO SAVE YOU...
THANK YOU...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH...


BECAUSE YOU TAUGHT ME TO USE A SWORD...
I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT MY LITTLE SISTER... TO PROTECT RIHAMA...

だーっ
DASH
MASTER?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING THIS TIME?
がばっ
WUFF
WHOA
...
IWANA AND I FELL IN THIS RIVER...
THE RIVER BY THE APARTMENT ...!!
ガシャーン
CHANK
HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO...!!
I WAS HERE!!
PEOPLE DO CRAZY THINGS...
THEY CARVED OUT A MOUNTAIN TO BUILD AN APARTMENT HERE.

BACK TO SCHOOL!
I SAID I'D SKIP, BUT I GUESS I'LL GO.
すん
SNIFFLE
THEY'D DRAG ME BACK TO SCHOOL IF ANYONE NOTICED ME.
...BUT I CAN'T GO TO THE LIBRARY NOW DRESSED LIKE THIS.
THE CITY'S HISTORY ...
I SEE.
AHHH!
IS THAT WHAT YOU TOLD THEM?
YOU'RE THE WORST.
DID YOU FIND THE PLACE? THEY WERE PRETTY HARD TO FIND.
WHAT KIND OF BOOKS DID YOU FIND THERE?
DID YOU FIND THEM?
FUUTA, IS IT TRUE YOU WENT TO PICK UP DIRTY BOOKS?

SIGN. REFERENCE ROOM

HMMM... ISHIGAMI-SAN,
SOMEWHERE OVER THERE...
AW, YOU KNOW, THERE'S JUST SOMETHING I'M CURIOUS ABOUT.
YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS CITY?

BOOK· CITY HISTORY 1

...HUH? I THOUGHT YOU JOINED THE HISTORY CLUB TO RESEARCH LOCATIONS FROM OUR PAST LIVES.
...
PAST LIVES? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
LOOKED WHAT UP?
WHAT?
OH.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
WHO KNOWS?
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
YOU'RE INTERFERING WITH OUR CLUB'S ACTIVITIES. COULD YOU LEAVE ALREADY?
BESIDES, SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT THE ART CLUB?
FUUTA!! IF YOU WANT TO DRAW, I'LL...
I'LL BE YOUR N-N-NUDE MOH... MODEL...
WHAT?! ARE YOU STILL THINKING ABOUT OUR CONVERSATION THIS MORNING?
HMMM.
IT'S HUGE...
BORROWED IT
SIGH.
WHAT AN EXHAUST-ING DAY...

WHAT?!

I HATE NIGHTTIME BECAUSE IT'S EASIER TO RUN INTO GHOSTS.
IT'S DARK BY THE TIME I LEAVE MY CLUB.

GOOD EVE-NING.
GOOD EVE-NING.
ISHI-GAMI-SAN.

HEY.
YOU.
STEP

WHAT DOES THE CITY'S HISTORY HAVE TO DO WITH OUR PAST LIVES?
I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING.
I THOUGHT YOUR HOUSE IS THE OTHER WAY.

...?!
IN THIS CITY...?!
...
WHAT?
HOUTAROU DIED AROUND HERE.
WHAT?
YOU DON'T KNOW?
I DIED IN THE SAME PLACE.
TRYING TO HIKE ALL NIGHT THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS IN THAT CONDITION WAS TOO MUCH.
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT? AFTER I DIED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STORY...
OH.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WE HAVEN'T DISCUSSED THIS LATEST PAST LIFE YET.
THAT THIS IS WHERE THAT PAST LIFE OCCURRED.
ANYWAY, HOW DID YOU KNOW?
I SEE.
...
IT WAS OBAYASHI-SENSEI, HOUTAROU'S SWORD MASTER.
D-DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF THE GHOST APARTMENT?
...

SATUR-
DAY.
SHOW
ME.
OH,
SORRY.
IF I TELL
YOU NOW,
IT'LL TAKE A
WHILE. LET'S
SAVE IT FOR
TOMORROW.
LATER...
KOKO-CHAN,
EAST-SAN,
SEE YOU
LATER!!
FARE-
WELL.
HUH?
I HAD A
STRANGE
DREAM ON
FRIDAY
NIGHT.

...WHAT SHOULD WE DO NEXT?
IS THIS ENOUGH?

...I'LL STAY HERE A LITTLE LONGER.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I'M LEAVING.

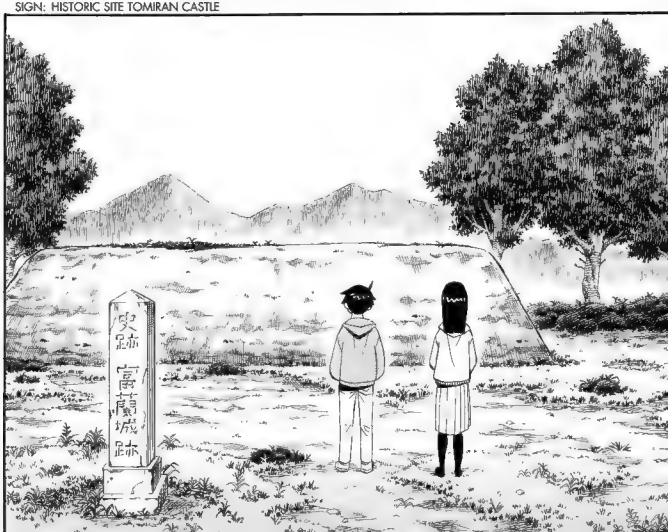
I'M... SATISFIED.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S ENOUGH.

THAT YOU MENTION IT...
YEAH ...

THERE'S SOME-THING I STILL HAVE TO DO.
OH...

I SEE.
GOOD BYE.

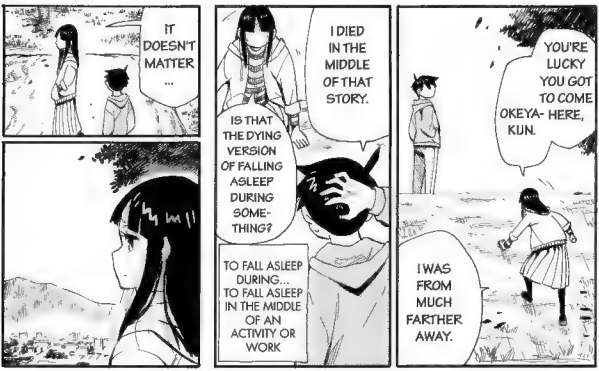
SIGN: HISTORIC SITE TOMIRAN CASTLE



I WONDER WHICH PART THIS WAS?
YEAH.
THEY SAID IT BURNED DOWN.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
THE REMAINS OF THE CASTLE.
SIGN: HISTORIC SITE
史跡富
HE WAS MY BROTHER WHEN I WAS YANN, TOO.
...YOU KNOW KAJIROU?
...
I DON'T REMEMBER.
DID HIS NAME HAVE A SIMILAR MEANING WHEN YOU WERE YANN?
HE SAID HE HATED THE CHARACTER "NEXT" IN HIS NAME.
HAVE YOU MET HIM?
YES.
THAT IDIOT, HUH?

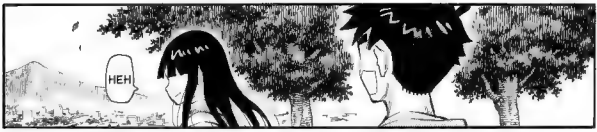
THE TEMPLE IS A RICE FIELD NOW.
YOU'D HAVE TO TAKE A BUS TO GET THERE, THOUGH...
THERE'S A BUILDING WHERE THE TREE WAS.
...DO YOU KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE TREE WHERE WE DIED OR THE TEMPLE THAT HELPED US?

...I SEE.
IT FEELS LIKE IT WAS LEFT BEHIND AS PROOF.
...IT'S IN THE NEXT TOWN OVER, THOUGH.
THIS PLACE.
IN ANY CASE, THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE MARKED AS A HISTORIC SITE.


IT DOESN'T MATTER ...
I DIED IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT STORY.
IS THAT THE DYING VERSION OF FALLING ASLEEP DURING SOME-THING?
TO FALL ASLEEP DURING... TO FALL ASLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ACTIVITY OR WORK
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU GOT TO COME OKEYA- HERE, KUN.
I WAS FROM MUCH FARTHER AWAY.

I WAS THE PRINCESS OF A SMALL COUNTRY DESTROYED BY WAR.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED,
BUT THE LEADER OF THE NINJAS TOOK PITY ON ME. HE TOOK ME IN AND RAISED ME.
I BECAME A NINJA.
I LIVED, BUT HATED BATTLE.
THAT'S WHY I FOUGHT UNDER TOKUGAWA AND SOUGHT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE, AND AN END TO THE CIVIL WAR.
OR SO I SAID, BUT I WAS JUST MAKING EXCUSES TO FIGHT.
...IT WAS STUPID.
JUST LIKE YOU SAID...
I WAS SIMPLY A MURDERER.
ISHIGAMI-SAN.

DIDN'T IT END THERE?!
THE CHAINS OF HATE... OUR CONNECTION ...
THE BOTH OF US.
BACK THEN...
WE WERE SATISFIED.


HEH.

AFTER ALL, I'M KOKO...
...AND YOU'RE FORTUNA.

OF COURSE IT'S NOT OVER.

フルトラ

スピリットサークル 魂環

SPIRIT CIRCLE

CIRCLE 21
CITY 2

ISHI-GAMI-SAN.
BACK THEN, WE WERE SATISFIED.
THE BOTH OF US.
THE CHAINS OF HATE...
OUR CONNECTION...
DIDN'T IT END THERE?!
...HEH.
...OF COURSE IT'S NOT OVER.

AFTER ALL, I'M KOKO...
...AND YOU'RE FORTUNA.

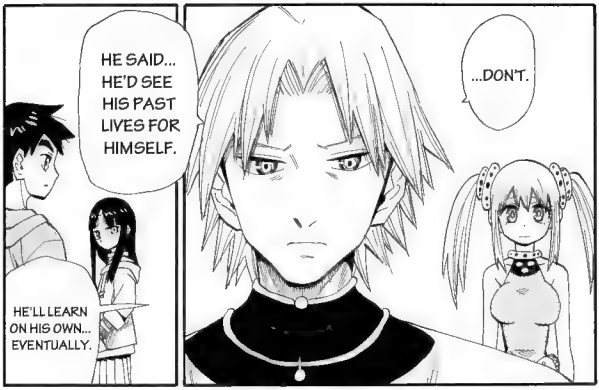
...REBORN THEN!!
WE WERE...
...REALLY SO IMPORTANT?
MORE THAN YOUR CURRENT LIFE?
IS THAT...
ABOUT KOKO.
ABOUT FORTUNA.
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT?
IWANA DIDN'T KNOW.
...AND LIE DOWN AND DIE?
OR WOULD YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH KOKO...
WOULD YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH FORTUNA?
I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU IF YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT *THAT*.
...ISHIGAMI-SAN.
YOU'RE ALWAYS *GOING ON* ABOUT THAT...

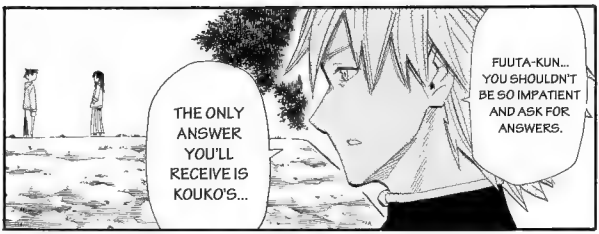
THAT'S ENOUGH ALREADY!!

WHAT DID FORTUNA DO?!
JUST TELL ME ALREADY!!

ARGH...
ぐしゃ ぐしゃ RUFFLE RUFFLE
WHY ARE YOU SO...

KOUKO!!
...
FORTUNA MADE...

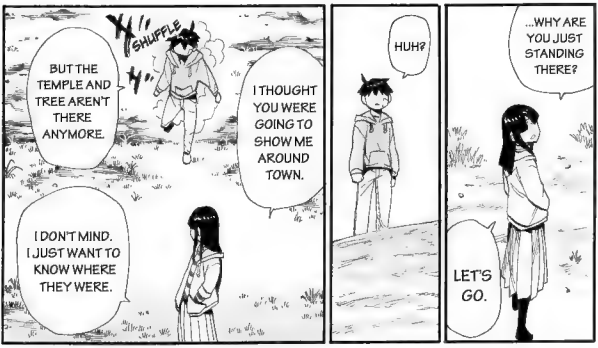

HE SAID... HE'D SEE HIS PAST LIVES FOR HIMSELF.
HE'LL LEARN ON HIS OWN... EVENTUALLY.
...DON'T.


THE ONLY ANSWER YOU'LL RECEIVE IS KOUKO'S...
FUUTA-KUN... YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO IMPATIENT AND ASK FOR ANSWERS.

EAST...
YOU'RE RIGHT.
...

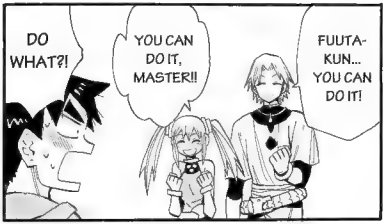
FORGET IT.
IT'D TAKE TOO LONG...
...TO EXPLAIN ALL OF FORTUNA'S WRONG-DOINGS.

SHUFFLE
HOW MANY IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT?
ALL OF THEM?
JUST HOW BAD WAS THIS GUY?


SHUFFLE
BUT THE TEMPLE AND TREE AREN'T THERE ANYMORE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO SHOW ME AROUND TOWN.
I DON'T MIND. I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY WERE.
HUH?
...WHY ARE YOU JUST STANDING THERE?
LET'S GO.

I-IT'S NOT A DATE!!
KOKO-CHAN, YOU'RE BLUSH-ING.
LET'S GO ON WITH THE DATE.
HOORAY!
GLAP
D-DATE?
RUNE!
HURRY, HURRY.
MAS-TER!
HA HA HA.
...TO HATE THIS GIRL...?
...BRING MYSELF...
WHY CAN'T I...
SHE HATES ME SO MUCH.
NOW THAT I'M THINKING ABOUT IT, I FEEL SO NERVOUS.
DAMN.

RIGHT?
THEY'RE UNBELIEV-ABLE...
HUMPH...

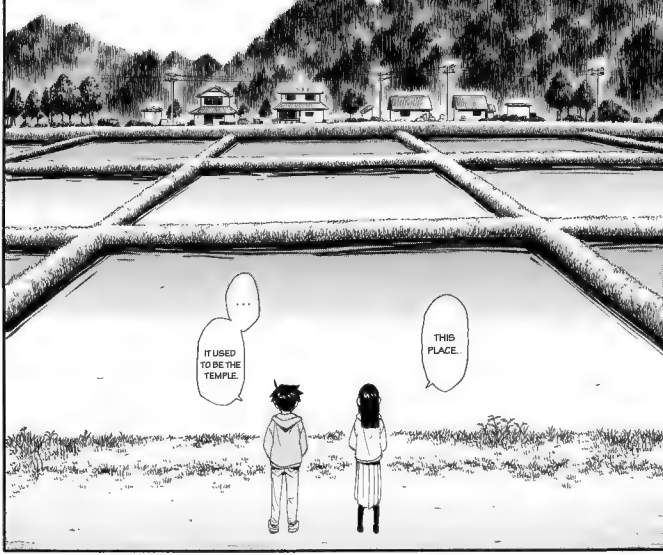

DO WHAT?!
YOU CAN DO IT, MASTER!!
FUUTA-KUN... YOU CAN DO IT!

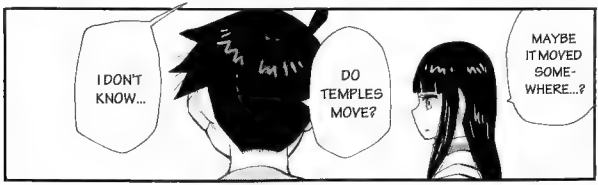
I ONLY JUST NOTICED, BUT...

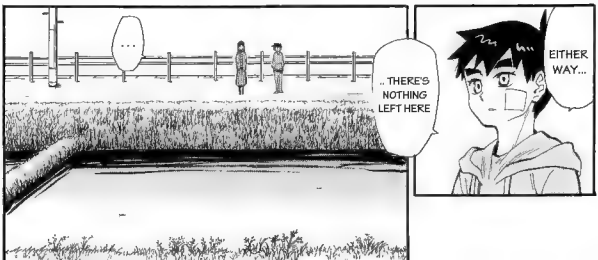
HUH?
...IN ANY CASE, LET'S GO.
I DON'T WANT TO STAY TOO LONG.
...

...THERE SEEM TO BE A LOT OF STRAGGLERS.

SURELY KAJIROU'S NOT ONE OF THEM...
SO HOT...
SO HOT...
AHHH...
URGH...
あつい
あつい
うう
あ…
DON'T MEET THEIR GAZE.
DON'T REACT TO THEM EITHER.
...!!
GOOD...
...WAIT, ISN'T THAT MY MOM?!
AND MATSU-SAN...
...YOU MAY HAVE A CERTAIN PHYSICAL PREDIS-POSITION.
MAYBE THE CHAKRAS AROUND YOUR EYES ARE EASIER TO OPEN
I ONLY SAW A SPIRIT FOR A MOMENT AFTER HOTAROU, TOO.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING WEIRD AFTER FONE.
WHAT IS THIS, AN ANIME?
...THAT LETS YOU SHOOT BALLS OF ENERGY?
ISN'T CHAKRA THAT THING...
I FEEL LIKE I SAW SOME-THING...
...DID YOU SEE ANY SPIRITS?
WHEN THAT LANDSLIDE HAPPENED DURING HOTAROU AND IWANA'S FIGHT...
SPEAK-ING OF SEEING...


...
IT USED TO BE THE TEMPLE.
THIS PLACE.


I DON'T KNOW...
DO TEMPLES MOVE?
MAYBE IT MOVED SOME-WHERE...?


...
.. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT HERE
EITHER WAY...

I DID AN AWFUL THING TO THEM
I LEFT WITH-OUT A WORD...
...AND DIED...
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO AKARI AND THE HEAD PRIEST...
I'M SORRY.
AKARI MUST HAVE CRIED...
WELL, YEAH.
EVEN IF THEY DID, IN THESE CONDI-TIONS...
MAYBE WE HAVE GRAVES AROUND HERE.
THEY COULD HAVE BROUGHT US HERE AFTER WE DIED.
THE PLACE WHERE WE DIED.
SHALL WE GO TO THE NEXT PLACE?

...IN CASE WE WERE SEPARATED.
WE ESTABLISHED A MEETING PLACE...

YEAH...
...I SEE. IT'S PERFECT FOR A MEETING PLACE.

SERI-OUSLY...
SLUUURP SLUUURP
ズズッ
ゴゴゴ

THERE'S NOTHING SENTI-MENTAL ABOUT IT.

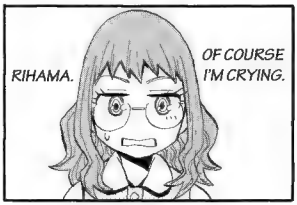
I WONDER IF THEY FOUND HAPPINESS...?
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AFTER THAT.
JINKUROU AND RIHAMA...
THEIR NAMES ARE DIFFERENT, BUT THEY COULD BE RELATED.
...MASHIRO-KUN AND UMI ARE THEIR DESCENDANTS.
MASHIRO TETSUMA > TETSU
MAY-BE...
HEH.
REALLY NICE.
IT'D BE...
...
HA HA.
THAT'D BE NICE.
UH, OH.
OKEYA-KU...
DON'T CRY HERE...
HEY.
YOU...

I'M GONNA TELL ON YOU.
YOU MADE HIM CRY.

T-TETSU, UMI.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
WAIT.
SNAP!
I'M PHOTO-GRAPHING YOUR DATE.

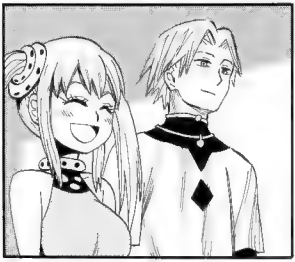
TO THE DOJO
WHAT? YOU GO, TOO, UMI?
THE DOJO'S RIGHT IN THE AREA
ME, TOO.
SOME-TIMES.
I GET HUNGRY
THIS PLACE
I COME HERE OFTEN ON MY WAY BACK FROM THE DOJO.
ARE YOU TWO ON A DATE?
WE'RE NOT..!!
UM... NO.
ANYWAY, ARE YOU TWO...
ARE WE WHAT?
OH
NOTH-ING.
WE'RE LIKE SIBLINGS.
DON'T BE STUPID
...IT SEEMS LIKE YOU TWO ARE ON A DATE, TOO.
ACT-UALLY...
ARE YOU?
AND MY GRANDPA'S DOJO
CAN'T SECOND COUSINS GET MARRIED, THOUGH?
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WOULD
WE'RE RELATED.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT
MY GRAND-MA'S SIDE, YOU KNOW.
SEC-OND COU-SINS?
WHAT IS IT?

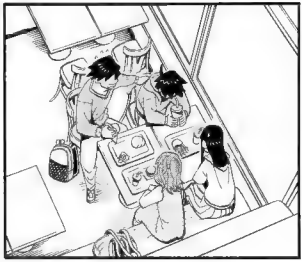
TH-THEY'RE RELATED...
ISHI-GAMI-SAN...
WE DIDN'T TELL YOU?
HUH?
CRINKLE
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
...I DIDN'T KNOW.
CALM DOWN...
I JUST THOUGHT IT'D BE FUNNY IF...
...IT WAS JUST HYPO-THETICAL.
WELL..



SIGN: HAMBURGER

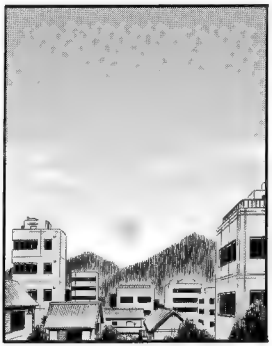
I'M GLAD THAT WE MET AGAIN HERE.





IT WASN'T A DATE.
WE WEREN'T ON A DATE.

SEE YA!
OKAY, OKAY.



...
WE WEREN'T!!
RIGHT?
WHO CARES WHAT THEY THINK?

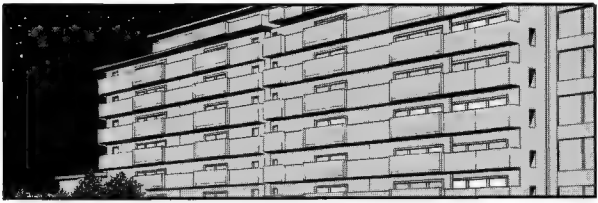
WHISPER WHISPER

THANKS.
...FOR TODAY.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET HOME?
...SHEESH. I'M LEAVING.
I'LL BE FINE FROM HERE.

BYE...
...

...THANK YOU.
NO...
BYE.

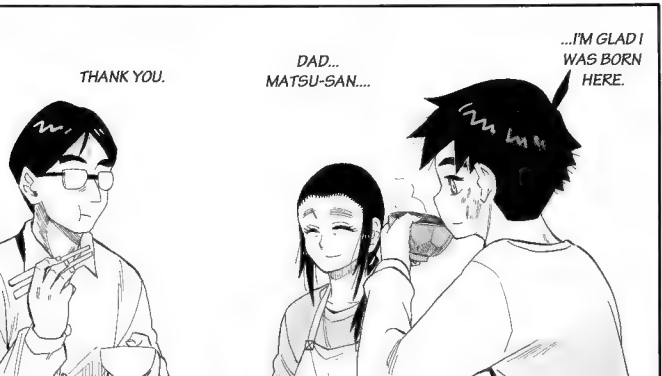


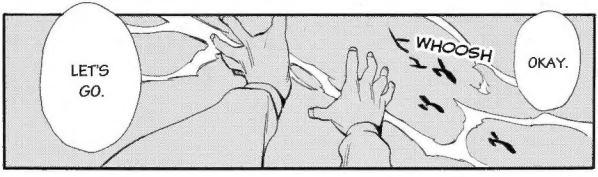
THAT DISTANCE I DESPERATELY COVERED ON FOOT IS A HALF-DAY ROUND TRIP BY TRAIN AND BUS, HUH...
IT WAS NO BIG DEAL.
HUMANS ARE AMAZING.

YOU TOOK THE TRAIN AND BUS, HUH? MUST'VE BEEN A LONG TRIP.
IN THE NEXT TOWN OVER?
WHERE WERE YOU TODAY?
THE CASTLE RUINS.

...SO, FIND ANYTHING AT THE RUINS?
MAYBE A SPIRIT?
OR A GHOST?
A PHAN-TOM?
HOW MATURE OF YOU TO TAKE THE TRAIN ALONE.

WHY DID YOU GO, ANYWAY?
I DIDN'T GO ALONE... AND THERE WERE GHOSTS...
TO STUDY THE PLACE...
WELL...
ACTUALLY...


THANK YOU.
DAD... MATSU-SAN....
...I'M GLAD I WAS BORN HERE.


WHOOSH
OKAY.
LET'S GO.

MAS-TER?
YOU JUST DID THAT THE OTHER DAY.
SHOULDN'T YOU TAKE SOME MORE TIME BEFORE...
I'M FINE.
I WASN'T THAT STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY HOTAROU.
I'M CALM, SEE?
ARE YOU?
I'LL SEE YOU OFF, THEN.

BAM
I'M NOT IN A HURRY.
IT'S JUST THAT EVEN THOUGH I KEEP MEETING THE ONES I WANT TO SEE...
REI...
I'M NOT FLUSTERED.
...I'VE NEVER MET YOU AGAIN...
REI...!!

YOU WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT REI WHEN YOU COME HERE, SO I'LL TELL YOU.
?!
FOR...
YOU CAN'T SEE THAT SPIRIT AGAIN.

スピリットサークル 魂環

SPIRIT CIRCLE